

Technical Education and skills training play important role in determining career choices for Toomey family

Now more than ever, technical education and skills training is a force in our society because of the fundamental value it adds in framing the foundation of our nation's economic infrastructure.

As a skilled craftsman, educator and principal of the KY Tech-C.E. McCormick Area Technology Center, Joseph D. Amann understands the importance of skills training because "we live it each day in our school."

By definition, the word vocational means "relating to, or undergoing training in a skill or trade to be pursued as a career," according to the *Webster Dictionary*. "Today, we refer to it as career and technical education," says Amann.

The area technology center is located in Alexandria across from the Campbell County Board of Education; the same location it has occupied since it was built in 1972. Amann has had the privilege of being the school's principal for the last 10 ½ years. Before that, he taught masonry at the school for 12 years. And, prior to becoming an instructor, he was a skilled masonry craftsman making a good living in the industry. Learning a skill and working toward advanced degrees including a master of science in vocational education paved the road for him to become a successful adult.

Amann:

"The perception of what is taught at our school and who attends isn't always understood. We do in fact train students in many traditional vocational areas such as welding, masonry, electrical technology, construction carpentry technology, automotive technology, and auto body repair. We also educate students in health sciences where they can begin a career as a Licensed Practical Nurse and/or in the program of information technology.

"I know for a fact that many of the students who have passed through the doors of our school have gone on to become successful in their occupational area and created a better way of life for themselves and their families – including continued economic growth for a better community."

"The faculty and staff want the best for all of our students and a shining example of success in technical education is the Toomey family. Siblings Bradley, Amber and Cassandra Toomey, as well as their mother Rachel, have benefited from technical education in Northern Kentucky. Each sibling has been or is currently a student in my school, KY Tech-C.E. McCormick Area Technology Center."

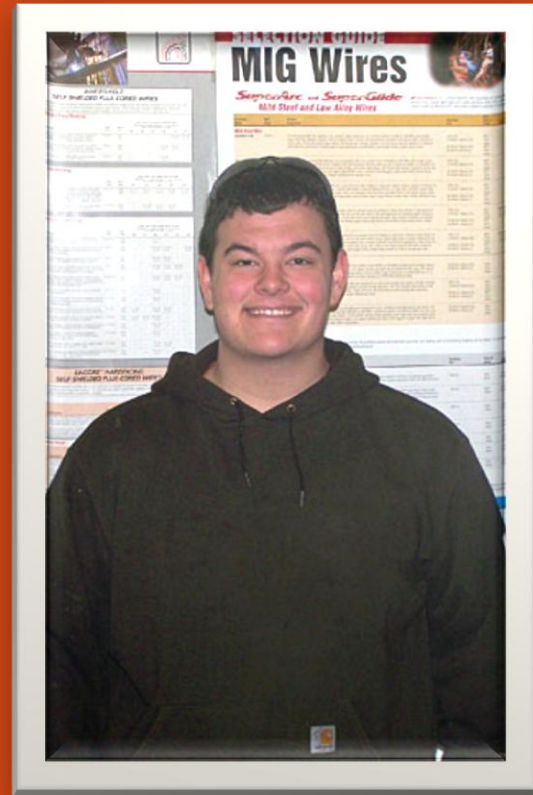


Bradley Toomey is a 2010 graduate of the welding program at KY Tech-CE McCormick ATC. Upon graduation from high school, he went to the Tulsa Welding Institute in Jacksonville, Florida where he excelled in his program and further refined his skills. On February 25, 2011 he graduated and was named the school's top student. He received a new Lincoln welder for the honor. Bradley came back home to Kentucky and went directly to work because of his great skills and work ethic. He is employed with the pipe-fitter union.

Bradley Toomey:

“Vocational Education really helped me get started in life for the career I wanted.

“Because I learned so much and had a great experience, I spoke to students this year about the many opportunities made available to me from my welding program at C.E. McCormick.”



Bradley Toomey



Cassandra Toomey with Health Sciences instructor Vickie Rebholz. Cassandra is in the "Dosage Calculations" class.

Seventeen year old Cassandra Toomey is presently enrolled in the school's two- year health science program and has completed her Medicaid Nurse Aid (MNA) certification. She also works with her mother at a local health care facility. Upon graduation from high school, she plans to attend Gateway Community and Technical College to work on a nursing degree.

Cassandra Toomey:

"Taking the health science program at CE McCormick convinced me to look closer into the health field for a good career. And, the math calculations in my health program helped me pass a math class at the high school."

Sixteen year old Amber Toomey is enrolled in her first year of a two-year welding program. She chose welding because her brother was successful. Her plans include additional training at the Hobart Welding School after graduation. With skills of her own, she has been nicknamed “welding woman,” a name she takes “as a compliment.”

Amber Toomey:

“Welding has made my high school experience so much better because I love the hands-on learning. I look forward to this class every day because I get to actually do something I like in class instead of sitting in a chair listening to a teacher.”



Amber Toomey

According to Amann, all three children have a good role model to follow. Their mother Rachel is working and going to school with the goal of becoming a registered nurse. She is currently enrolled at Gateway Community and Technical College working to complete an associate degree for nursing (ASD). Rachel works full time at a health care facility and takes classes at the technical college on her off days. She has earned the Medicaid Nurse Aid (MNA) and KY Medication Aid (KMA) certifications.

“Clearly, this family is in the process of creating a better way of life for themselves. Whatever their goals, career and technical education in Northern Kentucky and specifically from the C.E. McCormick ATC has provided an important pathway to their future,” said Amann. “Each of these family members wants to become successful in their respective career choice and is taking the steps to make dreams a reality. Because of the technical education and skills training they have received, they understand that technical education pays!”



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Photos for this story were submitted by school faculty and staff.